

BCRC Newsletter

Supporting Youth, Building Communities, A Holistic Approach



Volume 6, Issue 2

August 2008

Your History

20 August 1619:

The first shipload of African slaves to reach British North America landed at Jamestown in 1619.

September 1813-August 1816:

British Vice-Admiral Alexander Cochrane's offer of transportation for anyone wanting to leave the United States was widely circulated among the Black population. Four thousand former slaves deserted to the British side and were transported to the British colonies. About 2000 refugees set sail for Nova Scotia.

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Executive Director's Message

On June 6 about 100 guests and participants including Board Members, partners, parents and friends, joined us in saying "well done" to our student participants of the Mini-Poste program. For some it was a "goodbye" as several were starting high school in September. The grades four and five students were delighted with their certificates, awards and lots of kudos from family and friends. We look forward to seeing them again in just a few short weeks.

Three weeks later, the graduates followed up with a three-day sleep-over camp, courtesy of the Tim Horton Children's Foundation. This provided the continuing students and animators an excellent opportunity to get to know some of the new participants starting in the Fall.

We extend a special thank you to Commander

Simonetta Barth, Lina Borremans and the team from the SPVM's Station 26 for their dedication and continued support to BCRC and the Mini-Poste program.

On June 12, BCRC facilitated the participation of six youth in the Jamaican Diaspora Conference held in Kingston, Jamaica. The Jamaican Diaspora-Canada Foundation provided a wealth of support. We thank Dr. Dorothy Wills and Mrs. Beverly Townsend for their support in making the trip a reality for our youth.

In the last issue we highlighted Emru Townsend, who was in need of a bone marrow donor. We are pleased to report that his worldwide plea has yielded a match but we know that others are still in desperate need. We provide you additional information to help you consider registering as a potential donor.

Our rejuvenation process continues as we construct a team to develop and enhance our existing partnerships as well as develop new ones. BCRC is once again prepared to fully engage with a cross-section of individuals and organizations in order to address the many challenges encountered by our youth on a daily basis. This was the very mission imprinted on our organization at its establishment, and today, 14 years later, it remains our *raison d'être*.

We are encouraged with the positive feedback received about our last edition. As we will continue to incorporate your ideas, please send in your suggestions for a new name for our newsletter.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Akute Azu
Executive Director

Mini-Poste celebrates inaugural year

By Courtney Sewell

The first year of the Mini-Poste program concluded with a graduation ceremony for all participants, their friends and families, project partners and collaborators.

Of the 28 kids who completed the program, 24 attended the ceremony. Approximately 100 people in total were in at-

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Proud Officers

Youth

(Continued from page 1)

tendance. Each child was presented a certificate of participation and nine were given special awards. A buffet was held following the ceremony to provide guests with an opportunity to talk amongst themselves in a relaxed atmosphere. It also provided the opportunity for BCRC staff to solicit feedback from parents and partners.

During the ceremony, the kids eagerly awaited the announcement of the winners of the Mini-Poste competition between the schools. It came as no surprise to many that the kids from Simonne-Monet had accumulated the most points during the year and would be the recipients of "special" prizes. Upon announcing the winners, the Vice-Principal of Simonne Monet, Guylaine Cool, could be seen smiling ear to ear.

Shortly after the graduation, the entire Mini-Poste group was invited to a three-day sleep-over camp.

Participation was free of charge largely due to the generous contribution of the Tim Horton Children's Foundation who allowed the BCRC the use of their camp site situated in Quyon, Quebec. The Foundation also provided transportation to and from the camp.

Upon arrival, we were greeted by Jet and Disco, two camp counselors who took care of us for the duration of our stay. Our 24 kids enjoyed a wide range of activities including archery, canoeing and campfires. For many it was their first experience at a camp, and for some it was their first experience away from home.

At the end of the trip, the kids wrote about their experience and what they enjoyed most. The following note written by one of the kids epitomizes their experience:

"Thank you Luigi, Courtney and Jason for being extremely nice with me. I really enjoyed all the activities. xoxox

Foster care

A long-term foster home is being sought for 13 year-old Mary, who is pleasant, independent and helpful. She has a good relationship with her peers; likes to be active and is involved in community activities, such as singing and dancing. Academically, Mary is struggling and will need to be involved in an after-school tutorial program.



Mary can be stubborn and will test the rules, but she understands and accepts the consequences of her actions.

Mary is living in a group-home where she has made significant gains. She would like to be the youngest in a foster home, where she can experience what it means to be in a family environment. The ideal home would be that of a two-parent or single-parent Black family open to visits with

For more info about Mary, call Batshaw Homes for Children: 514-932-7161 ext.1139

Quality Time

By Jason Selman

We at Mini-Poste, much to the enjoyment of the little ones, took small groups of children involved in the program out on Friday afternoons. These outings were of a special treat but also a means to get to know them better and for them to get to know us.

Basically we took the kids out for activities like movies or Laser Quest and then out to eat shortly afterwards. But what was of much greater importance was *the talk*.

Whether walking downtown amongst the many distractions or sitting in the locker room of a skating rink helping the kids with their skates, what made our Friday Club special was the opportunity to talk to the children; about simple things like their studies, graduating and going to high school or even relationships (relationships being a relative term when talking about 12 year olds). Over time they opened up and trust was built.

"What makes our Friday Club special is the opportunity to talk to the children."

The effects of Friday Club were slow and steady. Though it was our intention to have the Club meet every Friday, that was not always possible, so some momentum was lost. But the simple fact that the children who did participate told their friends how much fun they were having helped to keep things going. Such positive feedback helped maintain interest and got children who were disinterested in the program to hold out and stay.

Once Friday Club was over it was easy to reflect on what transpired and to say that it was a success. We each had our favourite activities, but at a certain point where we went and what we did became irrelevant. What remained after all was said and done was the opportunity to simply be; to eat, talk and chill out with these kids in environments where they felt safe. This gave me the chance to get to know not only their names and faces, but their personalities and characters.

For all intents and purposes I began as a substitute teacher. And that was not good enough. I had to find a way to connect with the children. My solution was time. I found the time and I made my way in. I got to know them and they got to know me. We have an understanding. It was well worth it.

Tim Horton Children's Foundation Camp & BCRC



Putting smiles on children's faces



Partner Organization

Black Star Spencer Jean

By Jason Selman

BLACK STAR Big Brothers Big Sisters of Montreal is a non-profit mentoring organization. They recruit adult volunteers from within the Black Community to become friends and positive role models for Black youth ages 6-16, most of whom are from single parent homes. Meet Spencer Jean, one such volunteer who commits his time to Black Star as both a Tutor and a Big Brother:

Q: What made you decide to involve yourself in the program?

I got involved because my girlfriend was doing a summer internship at Black Star. After a while she just kind of pushed me into thinking about it. I went through the process, they told me how many kids were on the waiting list and I got involved.

Q: How would you describe what you do as part of the Black Star program?

I don't see it as community work. I have a little kid; he's like my baby brother. When I introduce him to people it's not as his mentor, he's family to me. It brings me back to being a kid. I love it. It's a great experience. I keep thinking that I bring a lot to the kids but honestly they teach me a lot. It opens up your eyes to things you lived through when you were a kid; things you may have completely forgotten. The things you rationalize, they're still going through. They cry, they get mad. They have emotions.

Q: What was the biggest surprise in terms of your expectations compared to the true nature of your involvement?

The biggest surprise was the common difficulties that the kids are going through. Whether they're African-Canadian, mixed, come from Nova Scotia, Toronto, New

York... they seem to all go through some of the same difficulties, not having a father around, not having a big brother. They know something is missing, they may not say specifically "I miss my dad" but it's the same. They have emotional issues; they don't know how to deal with frustration, jealousy, failure, things that affect them in their schoolwork on a daily basis. Sometimes just letting them talk allows them to feel like they can let go. Every one of them has told me something extremely personal, that they wouldn't tell their parents or their teachers. Everyone of them has taken some time out and said, "Spence, I want to talk to you about something."

Q: What are the challenges?

Keeping the same level of energy, both in the tutoring program and with my little brother. They're kids, it's like they're on energy drinks all day; you've really got to keep them focused. When you get into the serious conversations, about them, their parents, why they're fighting, doing the things that they do, sometimes they don't want to answer. They're scared, so you've

got to find a creative way to turn them around and that's not easy. You have to find ways to say "let me know what's going on."

Q: What would you say to someone considering being part of the program?

Go in and squash any perceptions you may have about what you think it is to work with kids. It's completely different than I thought it would be. The first thing that came to mind was "I don't have time". Then there's, "am I really a role model?" [But] there is no such thing as the typical role model, it doesn't exist. Go through the process and then make a decision. I enjoy it. At the end of the day you're working for somebody else and when you do this you're working for yourself. You're helping them out. It sounds corny but it does bring something to you.

Although single parents often do a great job, children in single-parent homes are:

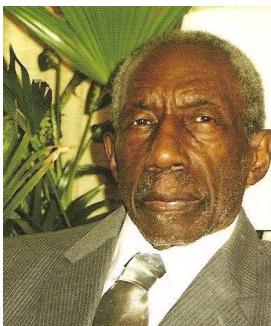
- 3 to 4 times more likely to have emotional or behavioural problems.
- more likely to experience lower academic achievement.
- more likely to engage in drug and alcohol abuse.

**BLACK STAR
BIG BROTHERS
BIG SISTERS
514-485-9737
black.star@bellnet.ca**

SPOTLIGHT

Meet Eric A. Llewellyn

By Luigi Marshall



Llewellyn

"Progress goes on forever, whether we like it or not."

These are the words of one Eric A. Llewellyn. It's the word "progress" in particular that helps define the eighty-six year-old's life.

Born in 1921 on the island of Grenada, Mr. Llewellyn grew up at a time only three generations removed from the abolition of slavery. Still under British colonial rule, life on the 344 km² Caribbean island wasn't necessarily easy. Yet, the ever-present sun presented Llewellyn with a place he calls paradise.

It was an era that Llewellyn fondly remembers as when toys were most often hand-made by the children who used them. However such activities were temporary distractions for Llewellyn. He had a passion for art and was very much into drawing by his pre-teen years. He was also studious. So much so, that he himself began teaching at the age of 16 under the monitorial system. This system, based on grouping children by ability, was structured so that a qualified teacher instructed children in an advanced group. These children in turn taught other children in groups beneath them.

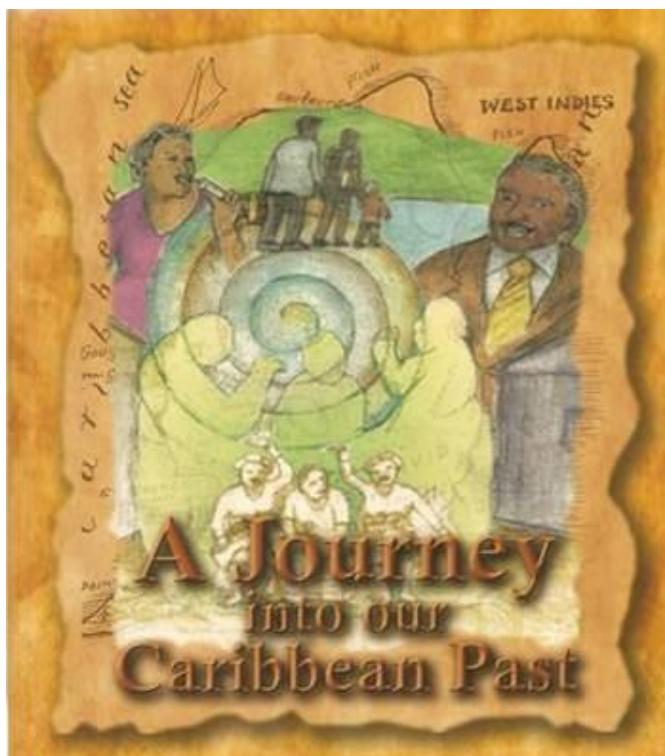
Whether it was drawing, painting or sculpture, Llewellyn thrived in the world of creativity. And as one that could not defy nature, he followed his talents to Montreal's Sir George Williams University, now Concordia, to study Fine Arts and Mathematics. Llewellyn's first time away from home was a significant period of change and personal growth, being one of only fifteen Caribbean students at Sir George Williams.

Upon earning his degree Llewellyn was hired almost immediately at Westbury College, a private institution, where he taught English and, not surprisingly, Art. And although his eventual retirement brought an official end to teaching Art, Llewellyn soon picked up right where he left off by helping out as a volunteer to seniors with the Côte-des-Neiges Black Community Association. The group of seniors has grown over the years from 5 to 50, with approximately 20 participating in activities on a regular basis.

At the age of 87, with the contributions of his

fellow seniors at the CDN-BCA, he's now written a book, "A Journey into our Caribbean Past." He wrote it because he noticed a nostalgia among his fellow seniors for things back home. The book offers stories covering various elements from the town market to sugar plantations. Illustrations are provided for each story and they are all the artwork of, you guessed it, Eric Llewellyn himself.

What's next for Mr. Llewellyn, only time will tell. Although this is his first published book, he's been writing for a while. He's not giving any details, but another book is in the works. But that shouldn't surprise anyone; the man is all about progress.



**Association de la communauté noire de
Côte - des - Neiges
Black Community Association**



We are proud to highlight the achievement of individuals and partner organizations in our community. Please contact us about any noteworthy contributions:
bcrc@qc.aira.com

Community Development

Jamaican Diaspora Conference

On June 12, 2008 with the support of The Jamaican Diaspora-Canada Foundation and the BCRC, Courtney Sewell & Simone Powell traveled to Jamaica to assist in community development efforts. Here is a glimpse of their experience.

By Courtney Sewell

From the moment I disembarked from the plane at Norman Manley International Airport, I was overwhelmed by the hospitality of the Jamaican Government. They were exceedingly welcoming and did what was necessary to accommodate the delegation.

Though the welcome we received was outstanding, I feared that the general sentiments among the locals would be far different. "Just foreigners coming here thinking they are big shots" or "they're just here trying to solve things they don't even understand" are sentiments I feared I would encounter. So I set out to gauge the attitudes of the general population.

I began with a security guard who I later befriended. He worked at the college where we resided during our stay. According to him, our visit was nothing but positive. He appreciated the fact that Jamaicans abroad were so interested in the prosperity of Jamaica that they would invest in such a conference.

Despite his sentiments, I was still dissatisfied and went further and spoke to more residents: young men manning jerk chicken stands, attendants at local stores and anyone with whom I was able to strike up a conversation. Invariably the response was positive. Most had been made aware of the conference through radio or television.

During our five-day stay, cocktails, dinners and other events were staged in our honor. The Canadian High Commissioner to Jamaica graciously received us in his luxurious open field backyard equipped with a bar and pool where we discussed social and political issues affecting Jamaica and Jamaicans.

But of all the events, none had more impact on me than Father's Day in Rosetown. After experiencing the "good life" Jamaica had to offer, it was heart-wrenching to see such a poverty-stricken community where children regularly went hungry and didn't have full access to education.

(Continued on page 7)



By Simone Powell

The Jamaican Diaspora Conference was about making a commitment to volunteering on the Island of my birth; networking, coming together as one to make a change; doing something positive for our brothers and sisters. I went back to Jamaica to contribute my time and effort and to give back to my country. As renowned Jamaican poet and activist Miss Lou said, "one, one cocoa full basket." It's a saying which means bit by bit; one that I always use to help me get things done.

Over the course of my week-long stay, there were various workshops dealing with justice, education, religion and more. One that touched me in particular, was given by The Centre for the Investigation of Sexual Offences and Child Abuse (CISOCA). It inspired me to recommit myself to my goal of helping these victims, and other homeless youth, stay off the streets.

"It took a toll on me because of the condition the children were living in. I ended up in tears."

Representatives from CISOCA talked about the conditions of their centre and what's needed to make things better. They are in need of donations, medical appliances, beds, computers and a bigger place to accommodate rape victims. Sometimes things get so crowded in other centers that some of the youth that were not initially rape victims end up being molested by someone who was already a victim of rape themselves.

The Jamaican Diaspora-Canada Foundation, JD-CF, was seeking donations to assist in development of the Rosetown Community, an inner city neighbourhood located in the heart of the capital Kingston. This community has been plagued by violence and poverty for many years. With the assistance of the JD-CF they are making a tremendous effort for the better.

The JD-CF also hosted an event for children where there were activities, food and music. We sang a few hymns at the opening and gave thanks to the Most High. The kids took part in singing and reciting poems about stopping violence within their district. A little five-year old girl, a year older than my daughter, recited one

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(Continued from page 6)

The undocumented and violent history of Rosetown was outlined to our group. For several years the community was torn apart by internal violence. It was only due to the efforts of a single man armed with a grade three education that killings came to an end. A make-shift community center made out of a boxcar symbolized the lasting peace and unity in Rosetown.

Despite their socio-economic situation, the children seemed happy and received us with smiles. At a certain point during the day it dawned on me that fathers were greatly underrepresented. This was somewhat ironic given that the day was organized in their honour. Later that afternoon a fellow delegate recounted her conversation with a local man that brought her to tears. She had asked the man who was illiterate what sort of things would be helpful. He replied, "I just want my kid to learn how to read."

During the conference it was comforting to hear Members of Parliament and public officials speak of an inspired new era of social change for Jamaica. Each spoke with passion and conviction. I, like many other members of the Diaspora, left the conference with renewed hope and aspiration for the future of our home country.

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of Miss Lou's poems. They were all wonderful and entertaining. There were other activities for them: skipping rope, basketball and face-painting. One young mother of three even came by the face-painting table to get her face painted as well.

Going to Rosetown was saddening. It took a toll on me because of the conditions that the children were living in. I ended up in tears. Strong heart-wrenching emotions took over me because, not far from there, I used to live on Mission road. A lot of them had many pins on their clothes representing friends aged 13 and up, that had passed away due to violence and poverty. At the end of the concert, JD-CF donated gifts to the kids. The children got toys, books, crayons and more. That was the best part of my experience, seeing the smiles on the children's painted faces. I have to give my thanks to the JD-CF for letting me be apart of the development efforts in Jamaica. It was inspirational.

ARTS & CULTURE

Life as an artist

By Jason Selman

Since joining Kalm Unity (a local artists collective, featuring some of the city's most talented vocalists and musicians) several years ago, Jah Nice (singer) & Fabrice Koffy (poet) have gone from being the new kids to central figures in the movement. Known for their energy, sincerity and passion, they have done nothing but add to the Kalm Unity experience. I spoke to them recently about their craft.

Q: How long have you been performing?

JN: Ça fait depuis que je suis membre de Kalm Unity parce qu'avant je chantais, je faisais des spectacles mais c'était pas le focus. Mais quand je suis arrivé à Montréal et découvert Kalm Unity j'ai vu les tendus de la scène,

une scène multi culturel et j'ai décidé de me vraiment me mettre là-dedans sérieusement.

F : Pour moi c'est un peu pareil. En 2003 j'ai vu Kalm Unity pour la première fois. C'était ma première expérience au micro. Ron got me to go, I stepped in, I saw it and I decided to go on the other side. It was my first experience musically and since then, every Tuesday.

Q: What are your inspirations?

JN: Définitivement, ma première inspiration et concèpte que je veux apporter c'est vraiment la famille, les gens qui m'entourent, que ce soit mes parents ou mes gens en Haïti. Justement les gens de Kalm Unity. Sinon, apart ça, il y a ceux qui ont passé avant: Al Green, Rita Mitsouko...

F: C'est la façon de vivre des individus que j'ai rencontré dans ce collectif. Quand je suis arrivé il y avait une certaine liberté, un choix... de choisir la liberté, l'amour, la paix. Et ça là, ça m'a aidé à choisir ma vie finalement. Aujourd'hui c'est ça que je retiens, faire la choix.

Q: What have you learned from Kalm Unity?

ARTS & CULTURE



Photo by Coey Kerr

Fabrice

deal with different characters, different mentalities and that's challenging. It's [also about] working, with your own ego? With Kalm Unity we've learned how to work together but also to spread our wings.

Q: Tell me about being French in a mostly English group.

JN: At first, it was hard. We thought that people didn't understand what we were saying but it was more that we didn't have the confidence or the ability to connect with the audience. Because now we see that people can feel what we say even though they don't understand all the words.

F: We were new, so we were different and we had to get to know ourselves. It was never like we were excluded because others were like "it's good you're representing for French people," and we were like "oh really, we're doing that?"

Q: What do you get back from your solo projects?

F: Kalm Unity gave me a life, as an artist. They gave me that and I took it and now it's mine and I'm going to keep it. I just behave with it as I would a little baby, something that needs attention so that it can grow. Nurturing it, being there, listening to it, trying to do my best. So that I can grow and see where it wants to go because I don't know where it wants to go but I want to be there to see where it's going.

Q: What makes for a good artist?

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F: Wow, so much, it's crazy. I want to say everything. [They] helped me to understand community and growth. Doing what you do. The first thing Jah Sun (founder and bandleader of Kalm Unity) said was, you're a poet, be a poet. Don't be a singer until you master poetry. This is what Kalm Unity wants you to do: to be the best of what you are, not something else.

JN: Learning to know yourself, your attitudes, to know each other. How to work with other people. It's not always easy. You have to

F: Honesty, be yourself. Whatever you do, do it well.

JN: A friend told me you become an artist when you realize what you want to communicate. That's the goal. Searching for your identity, for what you want to communicate.

Q: What are your future plans?

F: I'm gonna keep walking and doing things I believe will help me get where I want to be. Of course it's a give and take so they give I take, I give they take. My first album will be out soon enough and that will be my passport. I'll be able to say my name and give something as reference.

JN: I want to be in the artistic world until I'm very, very old. I'm only 25 years-old, so right now I know I want to continue singing, going on tour and everything, but I don't know about 20 years from now but I hope I'll still be in the artistic world doing something as an artist or for other artists.

F: Kalm Unity, just building a little community.



Photo by Coey Kerr

Jah Nice

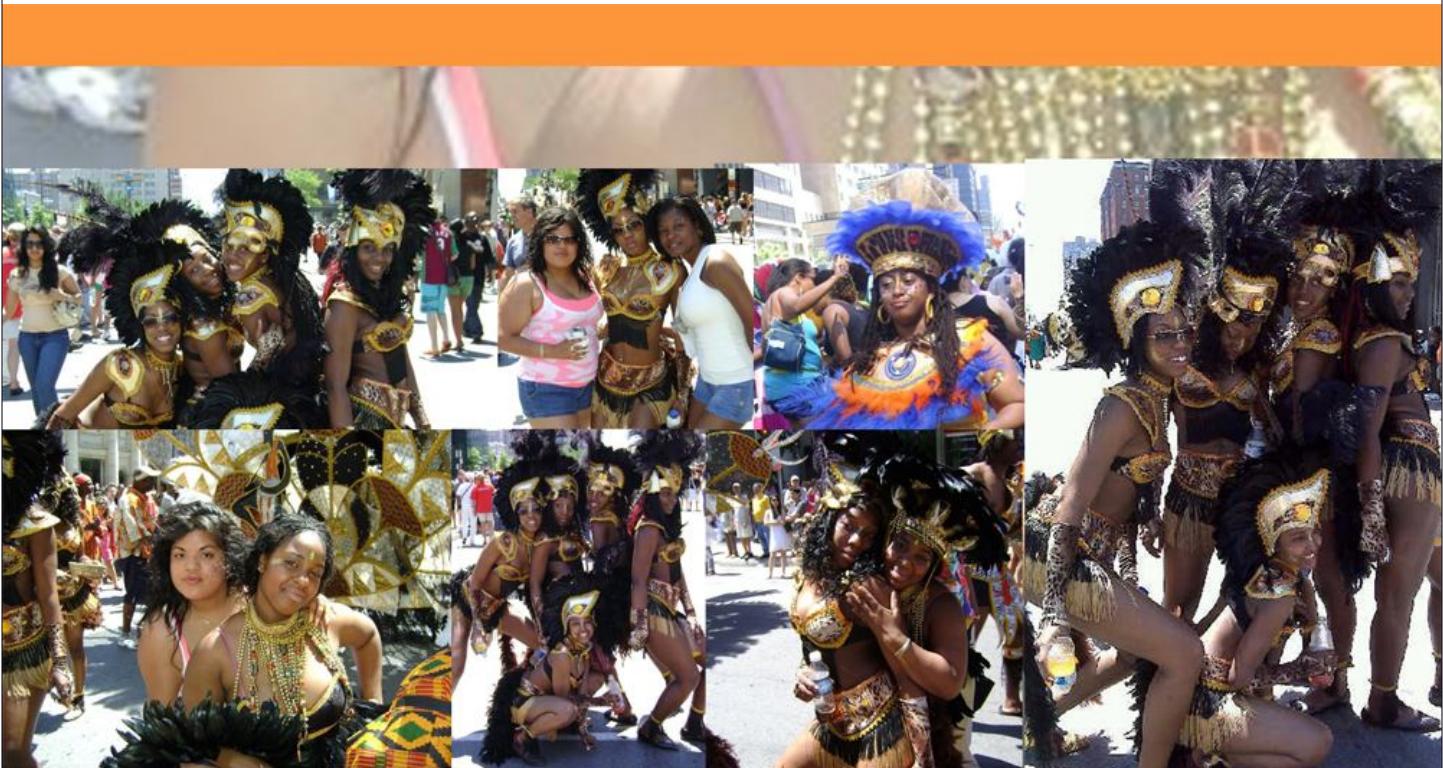
Kalm Unity performs every Tuesday

8pm, Sablo Kafé,

50 St. Zotique E.

Carifesta 2008

Roots Cultural Association wins
2008 'Band of the Year'



Carifesta 2008

Roots Cultural Association, a group that has been participating in Montreal's Caribbean celebration for over 25 years, has once again won the title of "Band of the Year." Having won the title over a dozen times, Roots' involvement in the Montreal Carifiesta parade is a given every year.

Congratulations to Pat Dillon-Moore, community activist and close friend of BCRC, and all Roots Band members!

HEALTH

Bone Marrow Donation

Emru Townsend's need for a bone marrow transplant has increased awareness of the difficulties associated with finding a compatible donor. We're pleased to report that Emru has found a donor. However in his own words, "Things are far from over."

Emru still has many obstacles left to surmount, Blacks/Africans continue to be underrepresented in the donor registry and many people still do not have a solid understanding of the process of bone marrow donation.

The following is just a bit of information on the subject reproduced from Héma-Québec. We hope it helps:

Stem Cell Donation

Stem cells are parent cells from which all other blood cells develop. Bone marrow constitutes the factory that produces stem cells.

Given that bone marrow produces blood, the life of a person whose bone marrow is not functioning properly is in danger.

The characteristics of the stem cells that are transplanted must be as close as possible to those of the patient. Since these characteristics are hereditary, we look first of all for a compatible donor, i.e., a person whose genetic tissue markers are sufficiently similar to those of the patient, in the patient's family (generally a brother or sister). The chances of finding a compatible donor in the family are approximately 25%, or one in four.

If a donor is not found within the family, we then try to identify a non-related compatible donor with the help of what we call the Stem Cell Donor Registry. The HLA (human leukocyte antigen) system is so complex that the chances of finding a compatible non-related donor for a patient can vary from 1 in 450 to greater than 1 in 750,000. That is why we need to have a Stem Cell Donor Registry with a sufficiently large and diversified number of registrants who could eventually donate stem cells.

Héma-Québec has set up and manages Québec's Stem Cell Donor Registry: a computerized bank containing the names of Quebecers who could eventually agree to a stem cell donation.

Approximately 34,500 people are listed in Québec's Stem Cell Donor Registry. This registry is linked to the Canadian registry as well as international registries, which enables us to look for an unrelated donor for a patient on an international scale. In return, our Registry is available to all patients in other provinces and elsewhere in the world who are waiting for a stem cell transplant. The

Canadian registry includes more than 220,000 donors (including Québec donors), while all of the international registries together provide access to more than 10,000,000 potential donors.

If you agree to be listed in the Registry, we will contact you for a blood test to determine your HLA type. Your HLA characteristics will then be entered in an online registry available to all patients waiting for stem cell transplants in Canada and elsewhere in the world. If, one day, a patient with the same HLA characteristics requires a donation, we will contact you. However, it may be a long time (months or years) before you are called upon.

You can always have your name removed from the Registry for any reason whatsoever. If you are called upon for a stem cell donation, you will have to complete several steps and we will ask you to confirm your commitment to proceed with the donation. You have the right to refuse the stem cell donation at any time, BUT you must realize that preparatory treatments for the stem cell transplant require that the doctors destroy the patient's own bone marrow with chemotherapy or radiotherapy. If you change your mind or are not able to donate, it is highly likely that the intended recipient will die. For that reason, keeping your word literally becomes a matter of life and death for the patient. You will be informed of the precise stage where your refusal to go ahead could endanger the patient's life.

The donor remains anonymous. We are committed to respecting your anonymity so as to respect your freedom of choice. Depending on the recipient's country of origin, you may be able to find out the recipient's identity a certain period of time after the donation, and the recipient may find out yours if you so wish.

What are the risks associated with donating bone marrow?

No surgery or anesthetic is risk-free. The doctor who will be collecting your bone marrow will explain these risks and the specific risks of bone marrow donation to you. Donating bone marrow usually involves a 24-hour stay in hospital. The pain caused by the procedure is mild, and complications are rare. Donating bone marrow does not compromise your health in any way, because the marrow removed is replaced naturally in just three to four weeks.

To learn more, visit www.heal-emru.com or www.hema-quebec.qc.ca. You could save a life.

OPINION

Obama keeps hope alive

By Luigi Marshall



We can all agree that Barack Obama's becoming the Democratic Party presumptive nominee was an historic moment. But what do we really want from him between now and November: a platform promising more jobs, cheaper gas, better healthcare? Definitely. But what's wanted most of all is for him to stay alive.

Admit it; his potential assassination has crossed your mind. You worry because despite his millions of supporters, all it takes is one person to kill the dream ... and there are a lot of crazy people out there: White and Black. When you think of John Wilkes Booth, Lee Harvey Oswald and James Earl Ray, white gunmen, don't forget John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo: the unexpectedly Black D.C. snipers.

It's ironic that Obama often gets criticized for not being Black enough by both Blacks and Whites alike. As if there's specific agreed-upon criteria, other than generally the colour

of one's skin, for what makes one Black. He's taken shots from Ralph Nader, Al Sharpton and most recently Jesse Jackson for, as they see it, insufficiently or improperly, addressing challenges faced by Blacks. It is as if his attempt to win the presidency isn't one of the biggest challenges any Black man in recent times has ever faced. As if, as he recently expressed himself, he has an easy time getting a taxi in New York.

Obama is prominent enough that the amount of racially motivated hate mail he gets is likely only surpassed by Minister Louis Farrakhan. But Obama isn't a rabble-rouser on the periphery. He's mainstream (read accepted by Whites). And that's really the reason why people are threatened by him; he will be the first Black presidential candidate with a legitimate chance of getting elected. Consequently, he gets so much hate mail that he had a security detail long before the Secret Service decided to tag along and protect the man.

And although the "protection" he gets from the Secret Service reportedly rivals that of President Bush, it shouldn't make you worry any less about his safety. At an Obama rally in Texas the world's best security force gave the order to put down metal detectors and stop checking purses. Why? Because they wanted to speed up the process of filling the arena and the "more than 17,000 people seemed like a friendly crowd." Seemed like a friendly crowd?? All it takes is one.

It's not just the random gun-toting racist that we have to worry about. Worry about respected politicians, like Mike Huckabee, and established media, like Fox News and Liz Trotta. They openly make inappropriate jokes about Obama being shot at or killed. They seemingly don't understand, or chose to ignore, the fact that such acts cultivate real attitudes that pose real dangers. But as politicians and the media are just reflections of the public, a blind eye is turned.

Don't get me wrong, I do want the man to have a long and fruitful life. I, like you, just have my doubts about his odds should he win the election. Remember, the fact that Colin Powell's family fear for his life kept the decorated war veteran from running.

I hate to say it, but I find myself hoping that Obama will stay alive at least long enough to be inaugurated. He has to make it to the presidency for it to count. There's no silver medal in politics. Nobody cares anymore that Al Gore and John Kerry were almost the 43rd and 44th U.S. Presidents.

If Obama does make it to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue there won't be an executive order instituting reparations for slavery. Nor will the plight of Blacks radically make an about face. The racial inequities faced by America and the world are systemic issues that have been solidified over many years. Neither one nor two presidential terms would be enough to revolutionize the system.

However, an Obama win would have an effect far deeper than his universal healthcare plan, stimulus package or views on free trade. Even if he's there for just a year, month or day, the inspiration will last forever. The little Black girl from Texas will believe she can be president. The young Cuban boy from Florida will also believe. Marginalized groups across the U.S. and the world will take one step further towards believing they can achieve the success they long for. And Obama wouldn't have to sign a single government bill into action for it to happen.

The significance of an Obama win can't be stressed enough. It would truly represent White America's readiness to accept the Black man. It would also represent Black America's readiness to take matters into its own hands. And nothing would be able to take that away from Obama or from us. Not even a bullet.

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT



A successful recipient of BCRC's employment services

Looking for a JOB or a SCHOLARSHIP?

BCRC has put together a booklet: Scholarship and Employment Services Guide: A Guide to Educational Funding and Employment Resources available to Montreal's Black community. You can come by our offices 9-5 weekdays and pick up a copy. Check out the latest info on vocational and trade training as well. Take advantage of the information on the shelves of our Resource Library. Come and browse or give us a call. Simone will be happy to assist you.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Africville Genealogical Society (1992). The Spirit of Africville (Maritext, ISBN: 978-0887800849).

David H. Rosenthal (1993). Hard Bop: Jazz and Black Music 1955-1965 (Oxford University Press, ISBN: 978-0195085563).

Edward Kamau Brathwaite (1998). The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy—Rights of Passage / Islands / Masks (Oxford University Press, ISBN: 978-0199111039).

Ivan Van Sertima (2006). They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America (Random House, ISBN: 978-0812968170).

Joan Morgan (2000). When the Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: A Hip-Hop Feminist Breaks It Down (Simon & Schuster, ISBN: 978-0684868615).

Zadie Smith (2006). On Beauty (Penguin Books, ISBN: 978-0143037743).

VOLUNTEER!

Our Community needs your help. There are many ways for you to get involved.

Contact us to find out how you can make a real difference in an area that suits your interests.

BCRC is looking for a new name for its newsletter

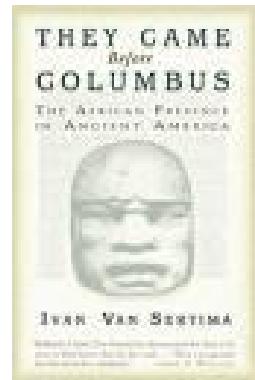
We would like your feedback. Please look at these suggestions and tell us which of the titles you like best. Better yet, email us your own suggestion.

- **Reflections**
- **Bassa Bassa**
- **Matrix**
- **Perspectives**
- **Semaji (to speak, to communicate)**
- **Kayjah**
- **The Blackboard**

Entrepreneurial Support

Do you want to give your new, or existing business, the best chance for success?

We have the tools you need to launch and grow your business. For more info give us a call.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

August to October 2008

BOROUGH MEETINGS: Côte-des-Neiges /Notre-Dame-de-Grâce

A healthy community promotes healthy living. Be informed about what is going on in your community. For information on date, time and location contact: **Bureau Accès Montréal**

NDG: 514-872-6731 **Bureau Accès Montréal Côte-des-Neiges:** 514-872-6403

GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF MONTREAL ANNIVERSARY

- Sept 27 - Polish Hall (2721 Jolicoeur)

For more info: 450-445-0747 or 514-748-1812

HIP HOP YOU DON'T STOP FAIR

- Aug 15 8 - Mackenzie King Park (corner Cote-Ste.-Catherine/Westbury): 9am-11pm

COUNCIL FOR BLACK AGING COMMUNITY OF MONTREAL, INC.

- Sept 20 - Conference "Palliative Care & Sex"
- Sept 27 - Trip to the Maritimes

All dates are subject to change - For more information on times & locations 514-935-4951

MOTHERS AGAINST VIOLENCE MARCH

- Aug 17 - Nelson Mandela Park (corner Victoria/Barclay): 3pm

For more info: 514-846-2020

A LOOK AT BARBADOS

- Aug 23 - Van Horne Park (corner Van Horne/Westbury): 12pm

For more info: 514-735-1015

Annual Vibrant Life Health Fair

There will be booths about nutrition, stress management, exercise, cancer, sickle cell, diabetes, smoking, sexuality, coronary health improvement, alcohol & drug abuse, and more.

Presented free of charge by the Adventist Health Association

Come receive information on multiple aspects concerning your health. Everyone is welcome.

Sunday, Sept 21, 2008

1pm-6pm

For info: 514-334-5397 or 514-457-6610 ext. 5300

6767 Côte-des-Neiges

Blacks in Montreal 1628-1989: An Urban Demography

Dorothy W. Williams

BCRC is proud to announce the October 2008 re-launch of *Blacks in Montreal* by historian Dr. Dorothy W. Williams. Considered groundbreaking at its publication in 1989, this book was the first demography to explore Montreal's Black diversity.



To commemorate the reprinting of this original text, a special DVD edition of a 30 minute interview with the author is included. To reserve an advance copy please contact the BCRC at 514-342-2247.



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WWW.BLACKYOUTHPROJECT.ORG

Supporting Youth, Building Communities

A "Holistic Approach"

The Centre takes a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of Black youth aged 0-30 and their families; this approach is called the "Holistic Project." Through a multi-intervention (holistic) approach, the Black Community Resource Centre helps young Black, English-speaking individuals fully participate in mainstream society.

The adoption of this approach recognizes that youth can have many needs (e.g., social cultural, health, education, economic, etc.) and that all these needs must be addressed in order for the youth to reach their maximum potential.

The Centre provides information and resources to both organizations and individuals within Montreal. In addition, we provide programming to Black youth in a manner which takes into account their many and complex needs.

PLEASE NOTE:

- We encourage our readers to visit BCRC's website for upcoming events in Montreal, BCRC publications, and much more.
- Please do not hesitate to let the BCRC team know what events are taking place within your organization. You can email or fax us.

OUR FUNDERS:

- Human Resource and Skills Development Canada; Multiculturalism, Official Languages Branch; Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, National Crime Prevention Centre
- Emploi Québec; Fonds Jeunesse du Québec; Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'immigration; Ministère de l'Emploi de la Solidarité Sociale et de la Famille



Disclaimer:

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